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introductory to

The Economic History of
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
of 1848

by

J. A. R. MARRIOTT, M.P.

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The Right to Work

AN ESSAY

5.

introductory to

The Economic History of
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION
of 1848

by

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FOR THE CITY OF OXFORD

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PREFATORY NOTE TO REPRINT.

THIS essay was written some seven years ago as an introduction to an edition of Louis Blanc's *Organisation du Travail*, and Émile Thomas's *Histoire des Ateliers Nationaux*, authorities which were then prescribed for the study of the French Revolution of 1848 in the Final Honour School of Modern History at Oxford.

The essay is here reprinted independently of the texts, primarily in the hope that it may induce a much wider public to read the two works, which are little known in this country except to professed students of History and Economics, and are not perhaps sufficiently studied even by them.

It is not too much to say that without an attentive study of Louis Blanc and Thomas the history of the French Revolution of 1848 must remain an enigma. Yet never has it been more essential than it is to-day that the motives of that curious episode should be accurately apprehended. The knowledge is important, not only to the student, but also to the man of affairs, and indeed to every citizen who seriously desires to arrive at a right judgement upon an economic problem which is still unsolved.

There are still large numbers of the wage-earning classes in this country to whom, throughout their adult lives, the fear of unemployment is a haunting nightmare. In the *Organisation du Travail*, Louis Blanc analyses the problem and offers a solution. The Revolution of 1848 gave him the opportunity of putting his principles to the test. What those principles were, and how far they got in 1848 a fair chance of demonstrating their accuracy and adequacy, it is the purpose of the following pages to show. Émile Thomas's *Histoire* is an indispensable complement to Louis Blanc's analysis. The *Ateliers Nationaux* may or may not have been organized on lines conformable with Blanc's principles, but they clearly demonstrate the results only too likely to accrue in a rough and tumble world from acceptance of the principles of which Blanc was the zealous advocate.

The experiment of 1848 is half forgotten. Each generation needs to be reminded of it afresh. The underlying problem, never wholly solved, becomes periodically acute. The economic and social dislocation which is the inevitable concomitant of a great war, and is certain to become more manifest and more menacing after the conclusion of peace, provides a hot-bed for the propagation of doctrines which are at the best of doubtful validity. To all who are exposed to the temptation of accepting them as gospel the following pages are respectfully offered, not as containing in themselves anything of special interest or permanent value, but as an *appêtisant* to the works of Louis Blanc and Émile Thomas.

J. A. R. MARRIOTT.

OXFORD, *May* 7, 1919.

INTRODUCTION.

§ 1. CONSTITUTIONAL EXPERIMENTS IN FRANCE.

THE French Revolution of 1848 differed fundamentally from that inaugurated by the meeting of the States General in 1789. Superficial resemblances between the two movements are obvious. Both began with a demand for political reform; both resulted primarily in the abolition of monarchy and the establishment of a republic; both ultimately issued in the erection of a Napoleonic Empire, liberal in form but in substance despotic. Here, however, the parallelism ends. The first French Republic derived its inspiration not from Rousseau's *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité* but from his *Contrat social.* The political Sovereignty of the People, not their economic emancipation, was its watchword. The driving power behind the Revolution of 1848 was, on the contrary, the clamorous demand of the Parisian *ouvriers* for the organization of industry by the State. The prophet of the new movement was Louis Blanc. It found its apotheosis in the *Ateliers nationaux.*

In these facts we find the clue to a paradox, otherwise difficult of solution,—the fall of the Orleans monarchy. Louis - Philippe had lost his intellectual elasticity and had survived his popularity; but at the opening of the year 1848 there was nothing in the parliamentary situation nor in the general political atmosphere to presage the outbreak of revolution or to indicate the imminence of the overthrow of the dynasty. The dynasty was not, indeed, overthrown; it collapsed. But its collapse was due to the pressure of economic rather than political forces.

Not that the latter were entirely absent. The experiment of 'constitutional' monarchy, inaugurated by the Revolution of July, had run its course. From the first it had never really captured the imagination nor conciliated the affection of the French people. To them it was merely the latest of a series of political experiments, and, on the whole, the least congenial. In 1789 not Paris only but France had overthrown the *ancien régime*; in 1792 she had got rid of the ancient monarchy; for seven years she had made trial of a Republic; the Republic had issued, as Burke had sagaciously predicted that it must, in a military dictatorship; the dictatorship had clothed itself with the form of an empire. In 1814 the Empire was overthrown and France recalled the Bourbons. In 1815 the Emperor returned and the Bourbons fled. But the Empire could not survive a crushing military disaster, and the victorious allies restored legitimacy in France. The restored monarchy of 1815 was not, however, the monarchy of 1814. The 'hundred days' had fatally damaged its prestige, and Louis XVIII returned to Paris too obviously in the train of the victors of Waterloo. But legitimacy France could understand, and both Louis XVIII and Charles X were unquestionably legitimate. Louis XVIII, indeed, was something more: he was a shrewd man of the world, and had his brother possessed a tithe of his shrewdness the elder line of the Bourbons would not have been thrust aside in 1830. All parties, save one, had now had their turn. The 'people' had realized their 'sovereignty' during the last decade of the eighteenth century; then came the turn of the army and its general; the ancient nobility and the clergy had enjoyed a brief triumph under Charles X (1825–30), and 'legitimacy' had issued in the 'Ordinances of St. Cloud'. Each experiment had failed in turn. What was left?

§ 2. THE JULY MONARCHY.

For eighteen years the middle classes enjoyed political supremacy under a 'citizen' king and a 'constitutional' monarchy. Louis-Philippe was to 'reign but not to rule', according to the French aphorism and the English mode. He did his best to fill the rôle of a bourgeois king. He was affable and accessible. He divested himself of the symbols of the ancient monarchy. The crown and the sceptre were laid aside; a white tall hat and a green umbrella better became the chosen representative of the French *bourgeoisie.* The Orleans monarchy and its ministers were pledged to a peaceful régime at home and abroad; to non-intervention and economic development; to the maintenance of order and the avoidance of extremes. The pledge was on the whole fulfilled, but the performance did not satisfy France.

From the outset there were elements of weakness in the position of the July monarchy, and, as time went on, specific causes of disillusionment combined with inherent disabilities to weaken still further the hold of Louis-Philippe upon the affections and even the respect of his people. The fundamental and essential flaw in the structure was the dangerously narrow base on which it was erected. Deliberately self-deprived of the Divine Right of Monarchy, it made no appeal to the Divine Right of Democracy. Unblessed by the priests, it was not 'broad based upon the people's will'. It rested entirely upon the suffrages of the *bourgeoisie,* and it essayed an experiment—that of constitutional monarchy—alien to the genius of France. Consequently, it failed to arouse enthusiasm in any quarter; such tempered popularity as it did enjoy was due rather to weariness than to zeal. Louis-Philippe and his régime never excited enmity; they did something worse: they provoked boredom. In Lamartine's famous phrase: *La France s'ennuyait.*

To the prevalence of this sentiment nothing contributed more than the inglorious character of the foreign policy of the leading statesmen of the period—Guizot and Thiers. Guizot was a sincere admirer of England and English institutions, and with several of her leading statesmen—notably Lord Aberdeen—he was on terms of cordial friendship. Moreover, the balance of political forces on the Continent pointed to Great Britain as the natural ally of the Orleans monarchy. Unfortunately, however, for France, Lord Aberdeen was at the Foreign Office for only five out of the eighteen years of Louis-Philippe's reign; during all the rest of the time English foreign policy was inspired by the masterful personality of Lord Palmerston.[1]

Lord Palmerston mistrusted both Louis-Philippe and Thiers, though the latter frankly confessed that the utmost for which France could hope was to hold the first place among the continental powers. Louis-Philippe's elevation to the throne of France (July 1830) was almost coincident with Palmerston's accession to the Foreign Office (November 1830). They first came into collision in reference to the revolt of Belgium. To suit the convenience of the European diplomatists, Belgium had in 1814 been merged in the kingdom of the Netherlands under the House of Orange. In 1830 the Belgians raised the standard of independence, and, in February 1831, offered their crown to the Duc de Nemours, the second son of Louis-Philippe. Had it not been for the stout opposition of Palmerston the offer would have been accepted, and the House of Orleans would have given a king to a country which for twenty years had formed part of the French Republic. That satisfaction was withheld from Louis-Philippe, and in place of the Duc de Nemours an anglicized Coburg reigned at Brussels.

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[1] Foreign Secretary 1830–41 and 1846–51.

Not only in Belgium did Palmerston thwart the policy of Louis-Philippe. In 1839 the Eastern Question was re-opened by the restless ambition of Mehemet Ali, the Pasha of Egypt. Mehemet Ali was not only anxious to throw off the Turkish suzerainty in Egypt, but had ulterior designs upon Constantinople itself. Louis-Philippe warmly encouraged him. Palmerston, however, had no mind to see the substitution of the powerful Mehemet for a feeble youth at Constantinople; still less to see French influence predominant in Egypt. In the Treaty of London (July 15, 1840) he secured the adhesion of Russia, Prussia, and Austria, and France found herself isolated by the diplomacy of Palmerston. Would France defy the will of Europe as interpreted by Great Britain? The fiery Thiers, then Prime Minister, would gladly have done so. Bulwer, the British ambassador in Paris, was instructed to tell him 'in the most friendly and inoffensive manner that if France threw down the gauntlet, Great Britain would not refuse to pick it up'. Louis-Philippe shrank from a complete rupture with the one liberal monarchy in Europe; Thiers resigned and was succeeded by the Anglo-phil Guizot. For the second time Palmerston imposed his will upon Europe, and inflicted a damaging blow upon the prestige of the Orleans monarchy, if not of France.

Louis-Philippe began to realize that something must be done to re-establish his credit in Europe. To this end he adopted the means most calculated to endanger his position at home. Thwarted by the Liberal minister in England, he began to gravitate towards the absolutist courts of the Continent, at that time dominated by Prince Metternich. Worse still, in order to promote the supposed interests of his family he embarked upon an intrigue in Spain which involved a gross breach of faith with England, and brought deserved discredit upon himself. Into the unsavoury details of the question of the Spanish marriages it is fortunately unnecessary to enter. Enough to say that by the marriage of his son the Duc de Montpensier to Maria-Louisa, the younger sister of the young Queen Isabella of Spain, he hoped to imitate the enterprise of

Louis XIV, and to 'erase the Pyrenees from the map of Europe'. It had been arranged with Great Britain, in 1845, that this marriage should not take place until an heir had been born to the Queen of Spain. The shameless violation of that promise aroused the lively indignation of Queen Victoria and of the English people, and, to their credit be it said, brought no corresponding satisfaction to the French. In France the Spanish marriage policy was regarded as a further illustration of Louis-Philippe's preference of dynastic to national interests.[1] Moreover, the final rupture with England threw France into the arms of Metternich. The latter seized the opportunity to extinguish the independence of Cracow—a region in which France had traditional interests which it was no longer convenient to assert. In Switzerland also the traditional policy of France was sacrificed to the necessity for conciliating the goodwill of Austria. In the war of the *Sonderbund* France saw herself committed by the action of her king to the support of the reactionary cantons, while Great Britain encouraged their successful opponents.

It cannot, therefore, be denied that in the domain of foreign policy the lustre of French prestige was tarnished during the reign of Louis-Philippe. Where French interests were vitally concerned, in Belgium and in Egypt, he was foiled by the firmness of Lord Palmerston. In the interests of his family he scored a shameful victory in Spain, at the expense of French honour and English friendship. Thus France, ardently enamoured of prestige and peculiarly sensitive to the loss of it, found herself alternately humiliated by the failures and dismayed by the successes of her ruler.

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[1] Cf. Lamartine, *Révolution de 1848*, ii. 16

Nor did the success of domestic administration compensate for impaired reputation abroad. The edifice of the Orleans monarchy rested, as we have seen, upon a singularly narrow base. From the electoral franchise all citizens were excluded unless they paid (as few people did) 200 francs in direct taxation. No one could be elected to the Chamber of Deputies unless they paid 500 francs. This was not democracy but oligarchy, and oligarchy, as is commonly the case, engendered corruption. In order to maintain a Government majority, dozens of sinecure offices were created and distributed with lavish hands among the supporters of the ministry of the day. Democracies are not immune from a similar taint, but some democracies seek to protect themselves by a place-bill; the Orleans monarchy did not. Consequently, before 1848 not less than one-third of the Deputies had become place-holders under the Government.

Corruption was not confined to the Chamber; it infected every branch of the administration.

Several gross scandals were brought to light in the last years of the July monarchy; and for every one which was discovered there were scores which were not. Denied the satisfaction of *la gloire*, the mind of France—or of its ruling class—sought compensation in commercial success, and found excitement in financial speculation. The unenfranchised peasants sought similar satisfaction partly in retrospect and partly in the prospect which in the latter days of the Orleanist régime began to open out from a subtle revival of the Napoleonic cult. The unenfranchised artisans were more dissatisfied and less imaginative. They sought not a political ideal but economic amelioration. They looked for inspiration not to the Napoleonic legend, but to the social teaching of Louis Blanc.

Of the many dangers by which the throne of Louis-Philippe was beset this last was indubitably the gravest. The demands of the dynastic Liberals might have been met by a generous instalment of electoral reform, by a lowering of the high property qualification required from Deputies, by the elimination of the 'placemen' who thronged the Chamber, and by a purification of the public service. Such reforms would not, of course, have satisfied the convinced political republicans, but until the Republic was actually declared they were not numerous, and, except in alliance with forces to which they were essentially opposed, they would not have been really dangerous. The Legitimists had never forgiven Louis-Philippe for betraying the interests of the Lord's anointed in 1830, and they were still sulking in 1848. Reinforced by the clericals, who were deeply chagrined by Guizot's failure (in 1847) to obtain for them the liberty of education so long and so ardently desired, the Legitimists were not a negligible factor. But they lacked leaders and organization, and even if they had been in a position to exercise a decisive influence upon events they would hardly have displaced a king to install a republic.

There remained a fourth party, neither Legitimists nor Orleanists, nor even political republicans of the type of Lamartine,—a party who would now be described as Social Democrats, the disciples of Louis Blanc. But for the prevalence of this party in Paris, the Revolution of 1848 would not have been accomplished so easily as it was, if indeed at all.

Socialism had never before made itself felt as a potent factor in French politics, though it was not a plant of recent growth. The theory of Socialism had long been discussed in the *salons* and the classrooms; it had even taken bodily form in the eclectic experiments of Enfantin and Fourier, but never, until 1848, did it descend into the streets and inspire the political action of the mob.

§ 3. FRENCH SOCIALISM BEFORE 1848:

(*a*) ROUSSEAU.

French Socialism traces its descent from Rousseau. The publication, in 1754, of his *Discours sur l'origine de l'inégalité parmi les hommes* marked the intellectual beginning of a movement which reached its practical zenith in February 1848, or perhaps in the *Commune* of 1871. In Rousseau's *Discours* we have the story of the social fall of man and his progressive degeneration from the state of Nature.

'So long as men attempted no work which could not be accomplished by the individual, nor tried arts requiring the co-operation of many hands, they lived free, healthy, good, and happy lives as far as their nature allowed them to do so . . . but as soon as it was perceived that it was profitable for one to have provisions for two, equality disappeared, property crept in, labour became necessary, and the vast primeval forests were transformed into smiling plains which it was necessary to water with the sweat of men, and in which slavery and misery were soon seen to bud and grow with the harvests. . . . The first man who, having enclosed a plot of ground, took it into his head to say: *This is mine,* was the true founder of civil society. What crimes, miseries, and horrors might not have been spared to the human race had some one plucked up the stakes and filled the trenches and shouted to his fellows: "Beware of listening to this impostor!

You are lost if you forget that the earth belongs to no man and that its fruits are for all." '

Thus Rousseau taught that in coveteousness and inequality was the root of all evil.

(*b*) MORELLY, MABLY, AND BABEUF.

A year after the publication of Rousseau's *Origin of Inequality* came Morelly's *Code of Nature* (1755). Morelly insisted on four points which have become the commonplace of modern Socialists: that private property should be abolished; that every citizen should take part in productive labour; that the whole work of production and distribution should be regulated by the State, and that the State should be the sole employer of labour. The Abbé Mably's *Législation ou Principes des Lois* (1776) is in the strict line of descent from Rousseau. Men are born equal; seeming inequalities of ability are due to inequalities of fortune; the State must redress artificial inequalities and gradually prepare the way for a return to primitive and equitable conditions by agrarian legislation limiting the amount of landed property which any single individual may hold; by direct taxation imposed upon land; by the prohibition of bequest, and by stern sumptuary legislation.

Thus far had French Socialism gone before the outbreak of the first Revolution. That movement has sometimes been described as essentially socialistic in character. Carlyle, for example, has described the work of the 4th of August, in phrase characteristically picturesque, as 'the St. Bartholomew of Property'. It was rather the 'St. Bartholomew of Privilege'. The first Revolution was, indeed, curiously individualistic in tone.[1] The widespread distress which prevailed during the winter of 1788–9 might well have imparted a socialistic impulse to events; as a fact it did nothing of the kind. You may search the *Cahiers* in vain for any tendency in this direction. They demanded the abolition of the last remnants of feudalism; they insisted upon legal and political equality; they called for a readjustment of the burdens of taxation, but there is no trace in them of the communistic teaching of Rousseau, Morelly, or the Abbé Mably. The characteristic note of the Revolution was, indeed, a revolt against that measure of State control and regulation which is implied in many mediaeval institutions such as the guilds. Among the Rights of Man upon which stress is laid in the famous Declaration of 1789 none was held more sacred than the right of property: 'Property is an inviolable and sacred right. No one may be deprived of it unless public necessity, legally established, evidently requires it, and then only on the condition of a just indemnity paid beforehand.' The Constitution of the Year III insisted that 'Property is the right of a man to enjoy and to dispose of his goods, his revenues, the fruit of his labour and industry'. The *Code Napoléon* employs almost identical language.[1]

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[1] See L. Levine: *The Labour Movement in France*, pp. 15 seq.

There was a moment during the pandemonium of the Terror when these sound principles were forgotten, but the frenzy soon passed. When Babeuf, an ardent disciple of Morelly and Mably, attempted in 1796 to impose Communism upon the Republic by violent means, and organized a conspiracy to effect his purpose, his schemes were betrayed and Babeuf was sent to the guillotine.

(c) SAINT-SIMON.

To the same school belong two other Frenchmen whose work cannot receive the notice which, in one sense, it deserves. The first of these, Claude Henri, Comte de Saint-Simon, was an aristocrat of the old régime, and was born in Paris in 1760. Like other French nobles he fought as a volunteer in the American War of Independence, but took little part in the Revolution at home, preferring philosophy to politics. His economic writings belong to the Restoration period: *L'Industrie* was published in 1817; *Le Système industriel* in 1821; *Catéchisme des Industriels* in 1823, and *Nouveau Christianisme* in 1825. In the latter year Saint-Simon died, having spent his last days in dire poverty. His teaching was at least as much ethical as economic, his primary object being to recapture for the modern industrial State some of those lessons of order, symmetry, and organization which to him, as to Carlyle, appeared to be the most enviable aspects of mediaeval society. He saw around him the chaos into which, as it seemed, society had been plunged by the rapid changes brought about by the invention of new mechanical processes, by the application of steam to manufacture, and the supersession of the 'domestic system' by that of the factory. The evolution of society, as he saw it, had been marked by three stages: slavery, serfage, and the proletariate. Theoretically free, the modern wage-earner was in no better position than that of the mediaeval serf. Consequently, it was the duty of all men to fulfil Christ's law by labouring to improve the lot, material, moral, and intellectual, of the most numerous and poorest class—the modern proletariate. All men must work, but their tasks were to be adapted to the diversity of their gifts. The *Savants* were to harness science to the car of industry; the *Industriels* were to devote themselves to productive work under the direction and inspiration of science, while the binding tie between them was to be provided by the priest (or artist), 'the man who by his thoughts and acts, by the morality of his whole life inspires generous sentiments and awakens sympathies'. Descending to economic details Saint-Simon advocated, as a first step, the abolition of inheritance. By imposing death-duties of 100 per cent. the State would gradually become the sole proprietor of the soil, the owner of all industrial capital, and the supreme organizer of production. In distributing its tasks and its rewards it was to work on the maxim: 'From each according to his capacity; to each capacity according to its works.'

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[1] See Guyot, *Les Principes de '89*, ap. Lecky, *Democracy and Liberty*, ii. 203.

For some years the teaching of Saint-Simon had a great vogue. His disciples organized themselves into a church, looking to Enfantin, upon whom the mantle of Saint-Simon descended, as the Supreme Father. But the vogue did not survive the Revolution of 1848.[1]

(*d*) FOURIER.

Almost contemporary with Saint-Simon was François-Charles-Marie Fourier. Born at Besançon, the son of a wealthy bourgeois, in 1772, Fourier published his most important work—*Nouveau Monde industriel*—in 1820, and died in 1837. With Fourier's philosophical ideas propounded in his *Théorie des Quatre Mouvements* (1807) we cannot concern ourselves. His practical proposals for the social and economic regeneration of mankind are so far important as to have commanded the modified approval of John Stuart Mill.

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[1] For Saint-Simon cf. A. J. Booth, *Saint-Simon and Saint-Simonism*, and P. Janet, *Les Origines du Socialisme contemporain*, and *Saint-Simon.*

'The most skilfully combined, and with the greatest foresight of objections of all the forms of Socialism', said Mill, 'is that commonly known as Fourierism. . . . This system does no violence to any of the general laws by which human action, even in the present imperfect state of moral and intellectual cultivation, is influenced; and it would be extremely rash to pronounce it incapable of success, or unfitted to realize a great part of the hopes founded on it by its partisans.'[1]

What was the nature of these proposals? The whole population was to be distributed into groups of 1,600 to 2,000 persons. Each group was to be planted on a square league of ground called the *Phalange*, and to occupy a pile of buildings to be known as the *Phalanstery*. Every one was to take part in productive industry, but was to be allowed to select his own special task. Fourier, with characteristic optimism, believed that no form of labour is intrinsically disagreeable, provided it is not excessive in amount or regarded by society as degrading. If, however, the members of the Phalanstery thought otherwise, the difficulty would be overcome by assigning the highest rate of remuneration to the least popular avocations. For private property was to be permitted, and even the right of inheritance to be respected. A bare subsistence wage was to be paid to all workers, and the surplus produce, after the deduction of the amount necessary to carry on future production, was to be distributed in fixed proportions to Labour, Capital, and Talent; to the first five-twelfths, to the second four-twelfths, and to the third three-twelfths. The several ranks in the hierarchy of Labour and Talent were to be determined by the suffrages of the community, and the directors or captains of industry were to be selected in the same way. Labour was to be further lightened by the strains of good music, and every Phalange was to have its Opera; stress was to be laid on education, but it was to be rendered so attractive that the children should resort to it spontaneously and without compulsion.

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[1] *Principles of Political Economy* (ed. Ashley), pp. 213, 215, 216.

Fantastic in detail, the scheme fulfilled, in general outline, Mill's canon of practicability. Mill made a further claim on its behalf: that it should have a trial. 'With regard to this, as to all other varieties of Socialism, the thing to be desired, and to which they have a just claim, is opportunity of trial.'[1] To Fourierism this opportunity was not denied. In Fourier's own lifetime a community was founded, on his principles, by M. Dulary at Condé-sur-Vesgne, near the forest of Rambouillet (1832), and, between 1840 and 1846, no fewer than six-

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[1] Op. cit., p. 216.

Several gross scandals were brought to light in the last years of the July monarchy; and for every one which was discovered there were scores which were not. Denied the satisfaction of *la gloire*, the mind of France—or of its ruling class—sought compensation in commercial success, and found excitement in financial speculation. The unenfranchised peasants sought similar satisfaction partly in retrospect and partly in the prospect which in the latter days of the Orleanist régime began to open out from a subtle revival of the Napoleonic cult. The unenfranchised artisans were more dissatisfied and less imaginative. They sought not a political ideal but economic amelioration. They looked for inspiration not to the Napoleonic legend, but to the social teaching of Louis Blanc.

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Socialism had never before made itself felt as a potent factor in French politics, though it was not a plant of recent growth. The theory of Socialism had long been discussed in the *salons* and the classrooms; it had even taken bodily form in the eclectic experiments of Enfantin and Fourier, but never, until 1848, did it descend into the streets and inspire the political action of the mob.

to Paris and lived on a small pension granted to him by the restored Bourbons. Louis Blanc and his brother were, meanwhile, left behind at Rodez, and were educated there at the Royal College. The father's pension ceased on the accession of Louis-Philippe, and his family were plunged into dire poverty. Louis, for a short time, earned a pittance by teaching, but soon found his vocation in journalism. Not long after the July Revolution he obtained a place on the editorial staff of the *Progrès du Pas-de-Calais*, but he returned to Paris in 1834, and was employed to write for the *Bon Sens* and other journals and reviews. Problems of Capital and Labour were at this time beginning to agitate France, as they had for some time agitated England. The *Code Napoléon* (in this, as in other respects, embodying the principles enunciated by the Revolution) strongly prohibited trade combinations, whether formed by workmen or employers. The supersession of the hand-worker, the introduction of machinery, the evolution of the factory system tended, in the first instance, in France, as in England, to profound dislocation of industry, and inflicted upon the manual workers much unmerited suffering. It was not always borne with patience. At Lyons and in other manufacturing towns symptoms of labour unrest manifested themselves more than once during the 'thirties. Violent oscillations between good trade and bad bewildered the workmen and gave rise to the problem of recurrent unemployment. The artisan found himself, amid multiplying signs of prosperity and even luxury, not infrequently without work and without bread. What was 'Liberty' to starving men? How were the principles of 'Fraternity' and 'Equality' realized under the rule of economic *laisser-faire*? 'We starve, we freeze, give us shelter and food, or we rise and kill or are killed.' Such was the threat uttered by the manual workers against the 'bourgeois' monarchy and its capitalistic supporters. At Lyons the silk weavers adopted the gloomy device, 'Vivre en travaillant, ou mourir en combattant.' 'No,' said Louis Blanc, 'you shall not die fighting, the State shall see to it that you "live by labour".' In this promise we have the germ of his most fruitful theory, his most important social experiment. But we anticipate events.

Profoundly stirred by the sight of suffering and perplexed by the paradox of increasing poverty amid 'plethoric plenty', Louis Blanc brought all the powers of a sympathetic nature, a warm heart, and an imaginative but ill-disciplined intellect to bear upon the economic problem.

In 1838 he started *La Revue du Progrès social*, and to its columns he contributed a series of articles which were subsequently expanded into the *Organisation du Travail*. Of the significance of this work more must be said presently. In

1841 appeared the first of the five volumes of his *Histoire de Dix Ans*, described by a not unfriendly biographer as 'a pamphlet in five volumes assuming a historic form and directed against the monarchy of July'. In the overthrow of that monarchy he played, as will be seen later, a leading part, and for two months he was a member of the Provisional Government and president of the Labour Commission. The events of the early summer of 1848 compelled him to fly the country. Condemned, in absence, to deportation, he found for more than twenty years a home in England. In 1858 he published a volume of *Historical Revelations*, intended to vindicate his own conduct in the events of 1848—revelations which formed the basis of his *Histoire de la Révolution de '48* (2 volumes, 1870–80). His *Lettres sur Angleterre* appeared in 1866–7, and his *Discours politiques* in 1882. Other works from his pen included a History of the French Revolution in twelve volumes. But he had neither the training nor the temper of an historian; he was a born journalist, an excellent party pamphleteer, an effective orator, and a warm-hearted philanthropist. The *Revelations* reveal much more than historical events; they afford a curiously complete revelation of the author. Émile Thomas, an unfriendly critic, speaks of 'l'implacable vanité et l'ambition démesurée' of his rival,[1] and there is nothing in Louis Blanc's *Revelations* to justify mitigation of this severe judgement. Confident in the accuracy of his own diagnosis, unwavering in his belief in the infallibility of his own prescription, he keenly resents any interference with the working of the experiment to which he had committed himself and his colleagues. The nature of that experiment will be disclosed later.

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[1] *Ateliers Nationaux*, p. 109.

Louis Blanc remained in exile until the fall of the Second Empire. On his return to France in 1870 he was elected a member of the National Assembly, and, subsequently, after the regular establishment of the Republican Constitution, a member of the Chamber of Deputies. One of the last acts of his life was to plead in 1879 for an Act of Amnesty for the Communists, to whose frenzied outbreak he had been strongly opposed in 1871. His wife—an English lady, Christina Groh—whom he had married in 1865, died in 1876, and six years later Louis Blanc himself died at Cannes (December 6, 1882). On December 12 he was buried in the cemetery of Père Lachaise with all the honours of a State funeral. Of diminutive stature—almost a dwarf—he is said to have had 'the quick and fiery glance of a Spaniard and a sonorous voice'. Neither as an historian nor as a statesman did he attain to anything like the first rank, but despite overweening self-consciousness and egotism he was a man of generous disposition and acute perception. He cultivated the emotions rather than the intellect, and most of his writings are of ephemeral interest. Nevertheless, he left behind him one work of more than ordinary importance, a work which it is hoped that this edition may rescue from the partial oblivion to which it has been consigned.

The *Organisation du Travail* possesses for the student of to-day a twofold significance: it marked an important phase in the evolution of French Socialism, and it supplied the real driving power for an historical event of first-rate importance—the February Revolution of 1848. Side by side with Louis Blanc's *Organisation du Travail* the Delegates of the Clarendon Press have decided, and in my judgement wisely, to reprint Émile Thomas's *Histoire des Ateliers Nationaux.* The second work is complementary to the first. Louis Blanc took elaborate pains to disown his legitimate offspring; he disapproved the establishment of the *ateliers nationaux*; he keenly resented the appointment of Thomas as director;[1] and for the failure of the crazy experiment he specifically repudiated all responsibility.

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[1] 'Not only was the direction of the national workshops entrusted to a person with whom I was unacquainted even by sight, but one of the claims which recommended that person, M. Émile Thomas, to the selection of M. Marie, was his ardent, indefatigable, opposition to my doctrines.' *Historical Revelations*, p. 196. In support of his contention Louis Blanc refers to the evidence of Thomas before the commission appointed to inquire into the disturbances of June 23 and May 15. Cf. *Rapport*, i. 352: 'J'étais en hostilité

'That public opinion in Europe should have fastened upon me the charge of being the founder and the organizer of the national workshops; a charge the falsity of which was made so undisguisedly patent—by my writings, my speeches, and my acts—by a series of official documents inserted in the *Moniteur*—by the evidence adduced before the solemn commission of inquiry which the National Assembly appointed in 1848—by the *Histoire des Ateliers Nationaux*, a special and complete statement for which we are indebted to their very director, M. Émile Thomas—by the public declarations of MM. Arago, de Lamartine, and Garnier Pagès, all members of the Provisional Government—by my public and repeated denials never contradicted, of any connexion whatever with these national workshops—in fine by the confessions of their own contrivers, is certainly one of the most extraordinary illustrations on record of the power of calumny, when used as the common weapon of divers hatreds, conspiring for the destruction of an ideal in the person of a man.'[1]

ouverte avec le Luxembourg. Je combattais ouvertement l'influence de M. Louis Blanc. . . . J'ajoute que j'ai remis à M. Marie, le 18 avril, une pièce d'où il résultait que Louis Blanc était un des instigateurs du mouvement de l'avant-veille.' (This latter sentence is, for obvious reasons, not quoted by Blanc, but it supports his main contention.) Again (July 28) Thomas testified: 'Jamais je n'ai parlé à M. Louis Blanc de ma vie, je ne le connais pas.'

[1] *Historical Revelations*, p. 193, and cf. p. 156, where he writes: 'those famous national workshops, which through

Nevertheless, repudiate his responsibility for the *Ateliers Nationaux* as he might, that disastrous experiment was not less the direct result of the teaching of Louis Blanc than were the co-operative workshops, for the relative success of which he was glad enough to take full credit.

In order to establish this contention it is necessary to examine, in some detail, the main argument of the *Organisation du Travail.*

§ 5. *Organisation du Travail.*

Louis Blanc wrote this essay, as it is important to remember, in the days when the results of the industrial revolution were first making themselves manifest in France. That revolution implied the substitution of competition for custom; of contract for status; of machinery for handwork; of large production for small; of the capitalist-employer for the master-workman; of 'hands' for journeymen and co-workers; of world-wide commerce for crude and simple methods of distribution; of the centralized warehouse and exchange for the local market and the periodical fair; of the railroad and the steamship for the packman and his mule; of speculative trade for self-sufficing production. With

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a really inconceivable misimpression all Europe has been induced to attribute to me . . . were founded and organized, not by me, but against me, or more properly to speak, against that social science of which circumstances made me the official exponent.'

the economic revolution came social changes. In a few graphic sentences Arnold Toynbee has indicated their main features :

'The slowly dissolving framework of mediaeval industrial life was suddenly broken in pieces by the mighty blows of the steam-engine and the power-loom. With it disappeared like a dream those ancient habits of social union and personal affection which had lingered on in the quiet homesteads where master and apprentice worked side by side at the loom and in the forge. Industry was dragged from cottages into factories and cities ; the operative who laboured at the mill was parted from the capitalist who owned it ; and the struggle for the wealth which machinery promised withered the old bonds of trust and made competition seem a new and a terrible force.'[1]

Even to the historical investigator, still more to the contemporary observer, the economic revolution seemed for the time being to have issued in a condition of affairs not far removed from chaos.

Out upon this chaotic world Louis Blanc looks, and finds it wholly evil. The suffering which he beholds seems to be not exceptional but chronic. Society itself, not any single class within it, is sick unto death. The cry of the silk-weavers of Lyons had pierced his soul. 'Why', he asks, 'should they die fighting ? Every man born into the world has the right to live, and to live by his labour. To secure that right, industry must be regulated by the State. If a man cannot live by his labour the whole social system stands self-condemned, injustice reigns supreme. Two thousand years ago the Redeemer came into the world; the work of redemption is not yet accomplished; has it begun? Fifty years ago our fathers inscribed upon their banners the watchword of *Liberty*, *Equality*, *Fraternity*. Where are we to look for the appropriate results? In the hideous contrasts of wealth and poverty? In the problem of unemployment; in sweated labour and the cry for work? You want to evoke among the masses some measure of enthusiasm for the course of political reform? You will never do it unless you demonstrate the essential connexion between a shifting of the centre of political gravity and the moral and material elevation of the masses: between economic amelioration and political reform. True liberty consists not in the proclamation of rights, but in the provision of facilities. It is sheer mockery to tell a man that the whole world is open to him unless you equip him with the weapons of conquest. "Equality of opportunity" means something more than a fair field and the demolition of barriers. You must provide every competitor with a similar equipment for the contest. You tell the poor man that he has the *right* to improve his position. What good is that to him if you do not give him the *power* to do it? You may as well inform the incurable that he has the "right" to be cured. If then we invoke the intervention of the State it is not to destroy "liberty" but to give to a metaphysical abstraction something of substance and reality. Such is the proem of the argument.[1]

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[1] *Industrial Revolution*, p. 226.

'We descend to details. The existing economic system is bankrupt. Society is incurably sick, but like Louis XI when at the point of death, attempts to cheat itself and its friends into the belief that "it was never better". If one member suffers, all the members suffer with it. If unlimited competition means extermination for the masses, it means gradual impoverishment and ultimate ruin for the middle classes as well. What is the position of the poor worker? The soil and its fruits are appropriated by the rich. The poor man may not shoot, or fish, or beg, or emigrate. He can only live by work, and work he cannot get. Competition has failed to secure to the workman the certainty of employment, and for those who are employed it means a progressive decline in wages, which already tend to the point of bare subsistence.[2] There are, even according to official statistics, more than one million persons in France who literally have not enough to eat, and one person in nine belongs to the "suffering" classes. In Paris alone 63,000 persons are living a life of crime, or of dire poverty. People prate to you of those admirable institutions known as "Savings Banks", and of the virtues of thrift! But where do the deposits come from? From the servant who robs his master, and the courtesan who sells her pretty face! The question has a graver aspect: in a state of society based on injustice the virtue of thrift is a vice, and does but tend to make the people more dependent on their rulers and induce them by a narrow and factitious interest to maintain the oppression that weighs them down. Thrift in itself is an excellent thing, but in an individualistic society it engenders egotism, it competes with charity, it imperceptibly dries up in the best natures the sources of benevolence, and replaces by a greedy satisfaction the sacred poetry of well-doing. Combined with the principle of association, on the contrary, thrift is not merely respectable, but a sacred duty.

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[1] Cf. Introduction (dated July 1847) to edition (the 5th, here reprinted) of 1848.

[2] Cf. table of wages, pp. 33–5, and note that the rates indicated differ in some cases from those in the first edition (1839).

'Individualism, as we have seen, results in competition, competition in poverty; of poverty the fruits are manifest: it destroys family life, it conduces to the practice of infanticide, it induces parents to desert their children. The number of foundlings in 1784 was 40,000, to-day it is

130,000; the proportion of foundlings to population has almost tripled in forty years. Then consider the scandal of child labour in factories; infants of five or six years of age working in the cotton-spinning mills for thirteen and a half hours a day! Go into one of these manufacturing towns and look at these puny, stunted, and pale children. Consider the effects of this premature labour on the army. Out of 10,000 young recruits in the ten manufacturing districts of France 8,980 were rejected as unfit; in the agricultural districts the proportion was only 4,029. Put in another way: to get 100 sound recruits at Rouen you must reject 170; 157 at Nîmes, 168 at Elbœuf, 100 at Mulhouse. And this is the fruit of your competitive system. Consider again the effect of the system upon education. How can you expect the parents to let their children go to school when their wages are so important to the family budget? We might have taken warning from England; but things are becoming almost as bad in France; when you build a factory you may as well close the school. What has *laisser-faire* done for the English poor? The English criminal receives 239 oz. of food a week, including 38 oz. of meat; the able-bodied pauper gets 151 oz. of food, with 21 oz. of meat; the independent labourer can only afford 122 oz. of food, with 13 oz. of meat! Oh! blessed competition!

'Is it necessary to go further? Let me demolish the idol of cheapness worshipped by the disciples of Adam Smith, and the idol of free trade. England is a standing monument of the ruinous effects of worshipping these idols. Look at the concentration of landed property in the hands of the aristocracy! Look at the increasing wealth of the capitalists and the poverty of the poor. England is consumed with the one ambition to find customers! What an ideal for a great nation! France has adopted the commercial and economic principles of England; to what can they ultimately lead but a war *à outrance* between the two great countries of the West?' Such is Louis Blanc's indictment of the existing system. What is the remedy? It should be noted that in putting forward his concrete proposals Louis Blanc is careful to warn the reader that the new system must be regarded as transitional, not the final goal of civilized society. How is this intermediate state to be aimed at?

The sources of economic power are, as he perceives, capital and credit. 'Unless "labour" can command these sources it can never be really emancipated; the politicians may prate of "liberty", but the masses can never achieve it. At present it is only the rich who can borrow capital; the Government, therefore, must become the banker of the poor. It must bring all the resources of the State to the task of enfranchising the proletariate, and must provide them with the primary instruments of production.

'The task can only be gradually accomplished. In order to regulate production the State must itself enter the competitive arena. Only by availing itself of the weapons of competition can it hope to destroy the competitive system. It must begin by raising a huge loan, and with the proceeds of the loan it must establish social workshops or factories in every important branch of industry, and equip them with the requisite machinery and plant. To these workshops all workmen of good character must be admitted, but once admitted all must be paid at the same rate. The false and anti-social education of the present generation will no doubt make it difficult at first to get the best work out of the workers by this method, but the difficulty will gradually disappear under a reformed educational system. During the first year of the new experiment the Government will apportion the several industrial functions. Afterwards, when the workers have discovered each other's qualifications, the grades of the industrial hierarchy can be decided by popular election, since every one will be equally interested in the success of the associated enterprise.

'The net profits will be divided annually into three portions: one portion will be distributed equally among the members of the association; of a second, part will go towards the maintenance of the aged, sick, and infirm, and part to meet deficits in other concerns; the third portion will be used as capital to provide further plant and machinery so as to extend the business of the concern and admit more associates. Every association may embrace trades which from their nature must be scattered and localized. Every social workshop may consist of several allied trades.

'Each worker may spend his wages as he pleases, but association in production is sure to lead to association in consumption and in recreation.

'Capitalists may become members of the associations, and will receive interest on their capital at a fixed rate under State guarantee; but they will not be permitted to participate in profits except in the capacity of workers.

'The system will be gradually extended by bringing into association the various workshops in the same trade, and ultimately by federating the different trades.

'At first the State-aided workshops will exist side by side, and will compete, with private enterprise, but ultimately the former will extinguish the latter. The struggle, however (unlike the struggle which is at present waged between one private capitalist and another), will be "conducted without brutality, or stratagem", and solely in the way calculated to attain its end—the gradual and peaceful absorption of private by social workshops. There will be no sudden or painful industrial cataclysm. Capitalists and operatives alike will gradually gravitate towards the social workshops simply by virtue of the superior advantages they offer. The State will thus become the one organizer of industry. The principle of association will be substituted for that of competition.

'Many incidental advantages will accrue from the change: production will be adjusted to demand; there will be no commercial crises; no violent fluctuations of overtime and unemployment; no commercial wars; and science, no longer regarded as the enemy of labour, no longer accentuating the evils and cruelties of competition, will receive adequate recognition and remuneration from the State and will place its industrial inventions not at the disposal of the monopolist but at the service of all. No more banks will be needed, for the credit of the State will supply the workman with all the instruments of production. In regard to land tenure inheritance will be permitted, but only in the direct line; collaterals will have no right of succession. Education will be universal, compulsory and gratuitous. Will this Utopian society be menaced by the bogey of Malthus? No: population will be restrained rather than stimulated by the diffusion of prosperity, for the birth-rate is highest to-day among the classes which have least to lose.'

This is the main argument of Louis Blanc's famous treatise. A separate section is devoted to the question of literary property, which is to be dealt with on the principles indicated above. 'Has "copyright" prevented the perversion of the public taste? Has it preserved intellectual liberty, or maintained a high standard of literature? Has it secured the interests of authors, prevented the starvation of some writers or the ill-deserved success of others? The only sane remedy is to abolish literary property. Literature should never be to an author the means of livelihood, it should be to his readers the means of life. Before 1789 the "profession" of literature did not, strictly speaking, exist. Since the Revolution, individualism has run riot, in Letters as in trade. In both spheres it has resulted in the prostitution of the talent of the producer, and in degradation and confusion for the consumer. There are those who advocate further protection of literary property. It would but intensify the acknowledged evils of the existing situation. What are the objects to be aimed at? To diminish the disastrous results of an internecine competition between publishers; to afford to every meritorious author, poor and unknown though he be, the chance of publication; to adjust remuneration to merit and to emancipate authors from servile dependence upon a public which demands vicious amusement; to make the best books the cheapest, and to redeem authors from the bondage of commercial speculation. All these things can be done only by the application of the social-workshop principle to literature, by the establishment of a self-governing social library sustained but not dominated by the State. The writers whose works are selected for publication would acquire, in exchange for their surrendered copyright, the exclusive right to compete for the national rewards, which would be awarded by Parliament on the report of a State censor. The social library would have no monopoly: excluded authors and those who preferred to do so would have, as now, the right to publish their own works through private firms.'

The essay concludes with a set of draft rules, or articles of association for the formation of a social workshop to be experimentally established by means of a fund raised by voluntary subscription.

To the fifth edition of the work, from which the present edition has been reprinted, the author adds a number of criticisms evoked by the first edition and his own replies to his critics.

The modern critic will find in the *Organisation du Travail* a good deal which has since become the commonplace of literary socialism. He will recognize also that the method adopted by Louis Blanc has been imitated by many of his successors in the craft. Such craftsmen invariably begin by painting in lurid colours the evils of the existing situation. For the picture painted by Louis Blanc there was, as we have seen, some historical justification. The economic times were out of joint. Periods which are marked by changes so rapid and far-reaching as to deserve the description of 'revolution' invariably involve the dislocation of labour, and consequently inflict much hardship upon the weakest economic class. The attention of contemporary observers is naturally arrested by the sight of undeserved suffering among the poor. *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, writing in the midst of the social revolution of the fourteenth century; Sir Thomas More, Bishop Latimer, and the author of the *Discourse of the Commonweal of England* writing amid the agrarian changes of the sixteenth; Louis Blanc surveying in France the chaos caused by the industrial revolution of the nineteenth[1] century—all alike bear witness to the hard lot of the poor in an age of economic transition. We must not, therefore, judge too harshly the lack of perspective and proportion which such writings commonly display; the arbitrary selection of sensational statistics; the hasty generalization and the obvious neglect of the ordinary canons of criticism and rules of evidence. All these defects obtrude themselves in the treatise under review. Passing on to a consideration of the remedy suggested, we may ignore the fantastic application of the principle of the social workshop to literary production, an application which sensibly weakens the main argument of the treatise. In reference to Louis Blanc's State-aided co-operative workshops it is only fair to insist afresh that between them and the *ateliers nationaux*, for the opening of which the Provisional Government was responsible in 1848, there was absolutely nothing in common. In one way only can Louis Blanc be made answerable for the fiasco which attended the experiment under the Second Republic. For years he had been preaching, in season and out of season, the *droit au travail.* That doctrine is at once the starting-point and the goal of the *Organisation du Travail.* It recedes somewhat into the background as Louis Blanc develops the details of his scheme for the establishment of co-operative workshops. But, as we shall see, it was the point upon which the Parisian *ouvriers* had really fastened. The co-operative workshops might in course of time have solved the economic problem ; but they belonged to the world of social utopias, remote from the Paris of 1848. In the doctrine of the *droit au travail* there was something tangible and realizable for the unemployed and starving artisans and labourers. In this sense, but in this sense only, was Louis Blanc responsible for the *ateliers nationaux*, which were started in fulfilment of the promise held out in the recognition of his favourite dogma—the *droit au travail.* And it is this dogma, in particular, which gives Louis Blanc his place in the socialist hierarchy. He himself posed as a socialist, and he was generally regarded as the leader of the active socialists of 1848. But the attentive reader of the *Organisation du Travail* will derive from it at least as many arguments in favour of co-operative production as of State socialism, perhaps more. True, the State is in the first instance to supply the working capital and the instruments of production, but after the initial send-off it is the self-governing workshop, not the State department, which is to employ labour and organize production. True, the private trader will disappear. But how ? Only, it would appear, under the stress of fair competition. Provided the competition is fair no individualist could resent it, nor could he, under such conditions, entertain any apprehension as to the fate of private enterprise. Louis Blanc is confident that his social workshops will win, in fair and open competition, by the mere force of superior attraction and by the merits of superior organization. If they can, there is no doubt that they will be entitled to their victory. In the sphere of distribution Co-operation has already to a large extent achieved it, and has achieved it in fair competition. That it may win an equal measure of success in the infinitely more difficult sphere of production is the sincere hope of many who have scant sympathy with the principle of State socialism; provided always that the victory is won without infringement of the rules of the competitive game.

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[1] In England it began in the eighteenth.

The practical scheme outlined in the *Organisation du Travail* has, then, strong affinities with that of productive co-operation. It has more than a superficial resemblance to the root idea of Syndicalism. In the scheme of the industrial syndicalist, as in that of Louis Blanc, we have the same insistence upon the necessity of proceeding on the lines of the trade-group; upon the idea of the self-governing workshop; of the democratic election of officers in the industrial hierarchy; of the federation of social workshops in the same trade, and the affiliation of allied industrial groups. Louis Blanc has in fact more claim to be regarded as the father of modern syndicalism than of modern socialism. But it is of syndicalism purged of the revolutionary attributes and confiscatory principles which have alienated, *in limine*, the sympathies of many who would be ready to examine syndicalist proposals—*per se*—in a spirit of scientific detachment.

Louis Blanc enjoyed one advantage which falls to the lot of few philosophers. He had the opportunity of putting his principles to the test of practical experiment. It is perhaps an equivocal advantage; and in Blanc's case the experiment was tried under conditions which were hardly conducive to success. But, as president of the Luxembourg Commission, and as an influential member of the Provisional Government, he had, as we shall see, a chance of which he did not hesitate to avail himself. To the story of the events of 1848 we must now make brief reference.

§ 6. The Revolution of 1848.

We have already referred to the political forces which were at work in France during the period between 1830 and 1848. The position of the Orleans monarchy gradually but sensibly deteriorated, and while enemies multiplied, friends grew more and more apathetic. Nevertheless, down to February 22, 1848, nobody supposed that the existence of the monarchy was seriously threatened. For some time past the cry in favour of parliamentary reform had been gaining in volume; in the course of 1847 'reform' banquets were held not only in Paris but at Lille, Rouen, and other towns; there was something ominous, too, in the reception accorded to M. de Lamartine's *History of the Girondins*; but when the Chambers met in December 1847 the King complacently declared that the constitutional monarchy would suffice for the promotion of 'all the moral and material interests of our dear country', and declined to consider the need for reform. The Opposition, consisting mainly of dynastic Liberals, reinforced by a small knot of Republicans, moved amendments to the address, but they were voted down by ministers and 'placemen', and the struggle was transferred to the country. A match was applied to inflammable materials by an unexpected demonstration on February 22, 1848.

A 'reform' banquet, organized by the electors of the twelfth arrondissement of Paris, was prohibited by the Prefect of Police. Some of the Opposition leaders determined, despite the prohibition, to attend it. It was arranged between them and the ministers that the Government should content themselves with a formal prohibition, the Opposition with a formal protest, and that the legal issue between them should be fought out in the Courts. On the 20th, however, the powerful organ *Le National* decided to make the proposed banquet the opportunity for a monster demonstration and procession, and called upon the National Guard to attend in uniform. Consequently, the Government prohibited the banquet, the Deputies decided to abandon it, and on the 22nd *Le National* and *La Réforme* issued a notice countermanding the demonstration. But it was too late. Before the morning papers reached their readers a large mob had filled the Place de la Madeleine and the Rue Royale, and the streets re-echoed to the cry of *Vive la réforme! à bas Guizot!* There were some collisions between the mob and the municipal guards; a few of the familiar barricades made their appearance, only to be torn down by the troops; nobody seems to have anticipated anything serious.

Meanwhile, in the Chamber itself Odilon Barrot, an eloquent lawyer of advanced Liberal views but loyal to the dynasty, indicated his intention, with the support of fifty-three Deputies, to propose the impeachment of Guizot's ministry. Thereupon, the Chamber was abruptly adjourned by the President.

The first serious symptom was the attitude, clearly manifested on the 23rd, of the National Guard. The latter not only invaded the Chamber with petitions in favour of reform, but actually interfered to prevent the forcible dispersal of the mob by the regulars. The defection of a body hitherto so faithful to the Citizen Monarchy convinced Louis-Philippe that the demand for reform and for the dismissal of his trusted minister could no longer be resisted. Guizot's resignation was announced to the Chamber at 3 p.m. on the 23rd. Count Molé was bidden to form a ministry, but failed in the attempt,[1] and, in the evening,[2] the King entrusted the task to Thiers. He accepted it on condition that Odilon Barrot should be associated with him, and that the King would consent to an extension of the parliamentary franchise, and an immediate dissolution of the Chamber. His conditions were accepted.

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[1] His failure was due to the massacre on the Boulevard des Capucins. Cf. Barrot, *Mémoires,* i. 520–2; Ducamp, *Souvenirs,* p. 71.

[2] Twelve midnight. Cf. Lamartine, *op. cit.*, i. 86.

The parliamentary Opposition was satisfied with the surrender of Guizot; the boulevards were illuminated to celebrate the downfall of the ministry; the National Guard and the shopkeepers were in high good humour.

Not so the workmen of Paris. The resignation of Guizot, the succession of Thiers, meant to them nothing but the substitution of one group of greedy place-hunters for another. They were out for something more. A crowd collected in front of Guizot's hotel; a pistol shot killed the officer in command of the troops guarding the Foreign Office; the troops fired; some eighty people were killed or wounded, and, in a trice, the bleeding corpses were placed on tumbrils and paraded through the streets of Paris. The tumbrils could not have been extemporized; the pistol shot was obviously prearranged to provoke reprisals from the troops, and to generate the excitement hitherto lacking among the mob.

The pistol shot disposed of the Orleans monarchy. Early on the 24th the mob marched on the Tuileries, and Thiers and Barrot signalized their accession to power by announcing the withdrawal of the regular troops. This weakness sealed the fate of the dynasty. At 1 p.m. Louis-Philippe announced his abdication in favour of his young grandson the Comte de Paris, withdrew to St. Cloud, and left the Tuileries in possession of the mob.

Alone of the royal family the Duchess of Orleans exhibited at this crisis conspicuous courage. With her two children, the Comte de Paris and the Duc de Chartres, she went down in person to the Chamber. Barrot and others made a sincere effort to secure the regency for the Duchess and the Crown for her son, but in vain. The mob burst into the Chamber, compelled the Duchess to retire, and demanded the appointment of a Provisional Government. The demand was supported by Crémieux, Ledru-Rollin, and Lamartine. The latter had come to an understanding with *Le National* to facilitate the restoration of the Republic, and occupied the leading place in the Provisional Government which, amid much clamour and confusion, was hastily nominated in the Chamber. The list comprised (besides Lamartine) Dupont (de l'Eure), Crémieux, Marie, Arago, Ledru - Rollin, and Garnier Pagès, and coincided, with curious precision, with the list prepared at the offices of *La Réforme* and *Le National*, with certain omissions. With all speed the members of the Provisional Government made their way from the Palais Bourbon to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and there the omissions were promptly supplied. Flocon, editor of *La Réforme*, Marrast, of *Le National*, Louis Blanc, and Albert, a soi-disant *ouvrier*, were added to the list. Originally, it would seem, the three journalists and Albert were added as secretaries, but they quickly asserted their right to be regarded as full colleagues.[1] Louis Blanc, in particular, was the medium of communication between his colleagues and the mob: sometimes urging the former to bolder action, sometimes restraining the eagerness of the latter. Of the rest the silver-tongued Lamartine was the most influential, and, more than once in the ensuing weeks, the situation was saved by his eloquence. From the very outset there were grave differences of opinion among the members of the Provisional Government. The 'moderates', led by Lamartine, were anxious to regard their functions as strictly *provisional*, and not to prejudge the verdict of the country as a whole. Louis Blanc, Ledru-Rollin, and the 'Reds' were determined to accept the clamour of the Parisian mob as the voice of the people of France, and to commit the country irrevocably to a socialist republic. The movements of the Government were quickened by the menacing attitude of the crowd. Early on the 25th, 30,000 to 40,000 people made a rush on the Hôtel-de-Ville, and later in the day the Place de Grêve was filled by a surging crowd estimated to contain nearly 80,000 men. They demanded the substitution of the Red Flag for the Tricolour, and the immediate declaration of the Republic. The ingenious eloquence of Lamartine alone averted a serious crisis,[1] and secured the retention of the Tricolour; but during the next forty-eight hours shoals of proclamations were issued from the Hôtel-de-Ville. The first ran as follows:

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[1] The accounts of the proceedings both in the Chamber and at the Hôtel de Ville are naturally confused and contradictory. Louis Blanc (*Revelations*, pp. 9 seq.) is at immense pains to prove that his own position and that of Albert, *ouvrier*, was from the first one of equality, but his evidence on the point must be accepted with reserve, and should be compared with the evidence given by Crémieux (*Rapport*, i. 266) and Adolphe Chenu (*Rapport*, i. 187) before the official *enquête*: also with that of A. de Tocqueville (who was present in the Chamber) in a letter to Nassau Senior (Senior, *Journals in France and Italy*, i. 21, 22) and Lord Normanby, *Year of Revolution*, i. 223.

'A retrograde Government has been overturned by the heroism of the people of Paris. This Government has fled, leaving behind it traces of blood, which will for ever forbid its return.

'The blood of the people has flowed, as in July; but, happily, it has not been shed in vain. It has secured a national and popular Government, in accordance with the rights, the progress, and the will of this great and generous people.

. . . .

'Frenchmen, give to the world the example Paris has given to France. Prepare yourselves, by order and confidence in yourselves, for the institutions which are about to be given to you.

'The Provisional Government desires a Republic, pending the ratification of the French people, who are to be immediately consulted. Neither the people of Paris nor the Provisional Government desire to substitute their opinion for the opinions of the citizens at large, upon the definite form of government which the national sovereignty shall proclaim.

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[1] But see Falloux, *Mémoires d'un royaliste*, i. 313.

'"L'unité de la nation," formed henceforth of all classes of the people which compose it:

'The government of the nation by itself;

'Liberty, equality, fraternity for its principles;

'The people to devise and maintain order.

'Such is the Democratic Government which France owes to herself, and which our efforts will assure to her.'[1]

The Municipal Guard was disbanded; the protection of the capital was confided to the National Guard; the Chamber of Deputies was dissolved; that of the Peers abolished; political prisoners were released; a royalty under whatsoever name—Legitimacy, Bonapartism, or Regency—was abolished; and the Provisional Government declared that it had taken all the steps necessary to render impossible the return of the former dynasty or the accession of a new one. It was not, according to Louis Blanc, until six or seven days after the establishment of the Republic that one of the members of the Government casually asked: 'À propos, Messieurs, qu'est devenu Louis-Philippe?' As a matter of fact the

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[1] *Annual Register*, 1848, vol. 90, pp. 239-40.

King and Queen had already escaped in disguise to the coast, and on March 2 they crossed in the steamer *Express* from Havre to Newhaven, where they landed with passports made out in the names of Mr. and Mrs. William Smith. The escape was not unattended with difficulty and even danger. The English consul at Havre describes it as 'a hair-trigger affair'.[1] Queen Victoria deeply sympathized with the misfortunes of the French royal family, and Claremont was placed at their disposal by their son-in-law, King Leopold. There the old King died in 1850.

In Paris events were moving rapidly. On February 26 the Republic, though not without hesitation on the part of the 'moderates' in the Government, was formally proclaimed. 'Royalty is abolished. The Republic is proclaimed. The people will exercise their political rights.' So spake Lamartine. But not for the enjoyment of political rights had the workmen of Paris overturned the monarchy. Lamartine's next words disclosed the real significance of the events of the last few days: 'National workshops are open for those who are without work.' Thus had Louis Blanc's words come home to roost. Lamartine regarded the Republic as an end in itself:

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[1] Louis Blanc's account (*Revelations*, p. 66) is, to say the least, disingenuous. For the true version see letter from the English Consul at Havre to Lord Palmerston ap. Queen Victoria's *Letters*, ii. 1848.

'Other forms of government are states of tutelage, confessions of the eternal minority of peoples, imperfections in the sight of philosophy, humiliations in the sight of history.' Not so Louis Blanc:

'It has always been my opinion that the Republican form of government is not the sole object to be aimed at, even by the politicians of the Republican school, if their love for the commonwealth be sincere and disinterested. For there is no form of government which may not be used as a weapon against the interests of the community. How often did the name of Republic serve only to mask oppression and to gild tyranny! On the 24th of February, I could certainly not foresee that, under the Republican form of government, the blood of the people would be poured forth in torrents; that General Cavaignac, a republican, would order the *transportation sans jugement et en masse*, and would allow Paris to be a prey to all the horrors of a savage resentment; that Louis Bonaparte, the president of the French Republic, would send soldiers to Rome, there to crush the Roman Republic. No such things could be anticipated. But to me the history of the past was sufficient testimony. I believed then, as I do now, that the chief object to be aimed at is to make him that works enjoy the fruit of his work, to restore to the dignity of human nature those whom the excess of poverty degrades; to enlighten those whose intelligence, from want of education, is but a dim vacillating lamp in the midst of darkness; in one word to enfranchise the people, by endeavouring to abolish this double slavery—ignorance and misery!'[1]

The sentiment was admirable: how was it to be translated into fact?

A decree issued on February 25 may answer the question. Its genesis is thus described by Louis Blanc himself. While the mob surged round the Hôtel-de-Ville a workman named Marche rushed into the Cabinet where the Government sat:

> 'his face, savage in its look at the moment, but noble, expressive, and handsome, was of a deadly paleness. He had a gun in his hand. . . . He presented himself in the name of the people, pointed with an imperious gesture to the Place de Grêve, and making the butt of his musket ring upon the floor, demanded the recognition of the "*Droit au travail*".'

Lamartine essayed to reason with him, but was promptly interrupted: 'Assez de phrases comme ça.'

Under this menace Louis Blanc himself drafted the following decree, which was forthwith issued:

> 'The Provisional Government engage themselves to guarantee the existence of the workmen by means of labour.
>
> 'They engage themselves to guarantee labour to every citizen.
>
> 'They take it to be necessary for the workmen

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[1] L. Blanc, *Historical Revelations*, pp. 17–18.

to associate with one another, in order to reap the legitimate reward of their toil.

'The Provisional Government restore to the workmen, who are its real owners, the million belonging to the late Civil List, which will soon be due.'

It was all very well for the Government to guarantee work to all applicants, but how was the promise to be fulfilled? The answer was forthcoming in the following decree (February 27):

'The Provisional Government decrees the establishment of National Workshops. The Minister of Public Works is charged with the execution of the present decree.'

§ 7. THE LABOUR PARLIAMENT AT THE LUXEMBOURG.

To the history of the experiment thus initiated we shall return presently. Even this success did not satisfy the egotism of Louis Blanc. On February 28, tumultuous crowds, led by some of the released revolutionary leaders such as Blanqui and Barbès, again filled the Place de Grêve. They waved banners bearing the words: 'Ministère du Progrès: Organisation du Travail.' Within the Cabinet their spokesman, Louis Blanc, took up the cry and demanded the immediate establishment of a Ministry of Labour. His colleagues refused; Blanc tendered his resignation, and a compromise was reached by which Blanc was installed at the Palace of the Luxembourg as president of a Commission charged 'to examine the claims of labour and to ensure the well-being of the working class'. Albert, *ouvrier*, was nominated as vice-president. The decree announcing the decision of the Government ran as follows:

'Considering that the Revolution made by the people ought to be made *for* them;

'That it is high time to put an end to the iniquitous and protracted sufferings of workmen;

'That the labour question is one of supreme importance;

'That there is no problem more worthy of the attention of a Republican Government;

'That it is a duty more especially incumbent on France to study and to endeavour to solve a problem submitted at present to all the industrial nations of Europe;

'That it is advisable to think, without delay, of making him that works enjoy the legitimate reward of his labour;

'The Provisional Government decree:

'A permanent Commission shall be formed for the express purpose of inquiring into the social condition of the operatives;

'In order to show how great is the importance which the Provisional Government attach to the solution of such a problem, they place at the head of the "Government Labour Commission" two of their colleagues, MM. Louis Blanc and Albert, the former in capacity of president, the latter, a workman himself,[1] in that of vice-president. Workmen will be called upon to be members of the said Commission, the seat of which will be the Luxembourg.'

The decree, dated February 28, was drafted by Blanc himself. How little it reflected the genuine sentiments of the Government as a whole may be inferred from the conversation between M. Marie and Émile Thomas some weeks later. According to Marie the sole object of his colleagues was to confine Louis Blanc to words; to put him in a situation where he could not do much practical harm; to let the workmen perceive for themselves the impracticability of his theories, and so undermine his popularity with the mob, and render him impotent for mischief in the future.[2]

Meanwhile, the Commission, according to promise, was reinforced by seven hundred delegates, who were supposed to be regularly elected by their several trades. In this way there was set up at the Luxembourg a socialist assembly, which, being in close touch with 30,000 to 40,000 workmen, became a serious rival to the authority of the Hôtel-de-Ville.[3] More than once, indeed, it attempted to supersede the Provisional Government, and to establish a Committee of Public Safety. The first demand of the Luxembourg

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[1] An inaccuracy. [2] See *Ateliers Nationaux*, p. 142.

[3] 'I proposed to install at the Luxembourg, in a regular way, a Labour-Parliament': L. Blanc, *Revelations*, p. 128.

Commission was for a ten-hours working day;[1] the second for the prohibition of *marchandage* (sub-contracting); the third for the abolition of piecework; and the fourth for a legal minimum wage. The last two requests were refused by the Government, and the first, though conceded, was abrogated in six months.

Numberless schemes were discussed by the Labour-Parliament at the Luxembourg: the foundation of agricultural colonies on co-operative principles; of a vast credit institution; of a central national bank with branches throughout France; of a national insurance office; of model lodging-houses, and labour exchanges. They secured the prohibition of prison-made goods, and, except under certain conditions, of goods made in convents; they arbitrated successfully between employers and employed, and settled several labour disputes.[2]

Few of the schemes so keenly discussed were actually brought to fruition, but one real achievement does stand to the credit of the Luxembourg Commission, or rather of its president. Louis Blanc unquestionably gave an impulse to the idea of co-operative production which is not yet spent. Imprisonment for debt having been abolished, he induced the Government to put at his disposal the debtors' prison at Clichy. There he installed 2,000 tailors and started them with an order for 100,000 uniforms for the National Guard and 10,000 for the Garde Mobile, the materials being supplied by the Government. Apart from the fact that the capital was not supplied by the State, but was borrowed from (and duly repaid to) the master-tailors, the Clichy establishment was worked on the principles set forth in the *Organisation du Travail.* All workers received equal wages; a fund was set apart for widows, orphans, and invalided associates, and of the net profits half was distributed to the workmen in equal shares, the other half was capitalized. Similar societies—about one hundred in all—were established by saddlers, by spinners, and other craftsmen. Some were stillborn; others failed after a few years' experiment; twenty were said to be still flourishing in 1858.[1]

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[1] In the provinces eleven hours.

[2] For details see *Report* presented by the Commission at the end of April, reprinted in Sargant, *Social Innovators*, 380–8.

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[1] *Revelations,* p. 188. Various experiments on similar lines were made after the fall of Louis Blanc. Cf. Laveleye, *Socialism of To-day,* p. 73 (note). 'In 1848 the Constituent Assembly voted, in July, that is after the revolution of June, a subsidy of three millions of francs in order to encourage the formation of working men's associations. Six hundred applications, half coming from Paris alone, were made to the commission entrusted with the distribution of the funds, of which only fifty-six were accepted. In Paris, thirty associations, twenty-seven composed of working men, comprising in all 434 associates, received 890,500 francs. Within six months three of the Parisian associations failed; and of the 434 associates, 74 resigned, 15 were excluded, and there were eleven changes of managers. In July 1851, eighteen associa-

But, whatever the immediate fortunes of these societies, it is impossible to deny to Louis Blanc credit for the initiation of an important social movement in France.

It had been well for his reputation and his own peace had he confined himself to the encouragement of co-operative societies and left politics, for which he was eminently unfitted, severely alone. Such abstention was not, however, easy in the Paris of 1848, and the consequence was that the part played by Louis Blanc in the critical events of March, April, and May was, to say the least, equivocal. He himself protests his loyalty to his colleagues of the Hôtel-de-Ville; he hints, indeed, that more than once they were saved from the disgusted and infuriated mob mainly by his intervention.

Those months were full of peril for the Republic. Thrice it was threatened with destruction by the violence of the mob clamouring for the realization of the socialistic millennium: on March 17, on April 16, and on May 15. These were the 'days' of the Second Republic. From the first the Provisional Government was torn by internal dissensions: on the one side the political Republicans represented by Lamartine, on the other the Socialists led by Louis Blanc and Albert, *ouvrier*.

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tions had ceased to exist. One year later twelve others had vanished. In 1865 four were still extant and had been more or less successful. In 1875 there was but a single one left.'

The latter looked for support to the Labour Parliament at the Luxembourg, to the socialist clubs, and, above all, to the inflammatory mob of Paris. The former relied immediately on the National Guard, and ultimately upon the moderation and good sense of the provinces.

Everything depended upon the issue of the elections which on March 5 had been fixed for April 9. Consequently, agents were dispatched into the provinces to 'instruct' the electors in their political duty. Ledru-Rollin, who as Minister of the Interior was immediately responsible for this step, was an 'ultra' of the 'ultras'. He bade his commissioners remember that they were entrusted with boundless powers, and that they must use them to secure a National Assembly devoted to the cause of the Republic:

> 'Place everywhere men whose hearts and courage are with us, men who will give us an Assembly capable of understanding and carrying out the will of the people. . . . You are responsible only to your own consciences. Whatever the public safety requires you must do. Your great business is with the elections. Be on your guard against those who, having served a king, now profess to serve a people. The Assembly must be animated with the spirit of the revolution. Those who seek a seat in it must be pure from the traditions of the past. Let the word everywhere be new men! and, if possible, from the mass of the people.'[1]

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[1] *Actes du Gouvernement provisoire*, ii. 91, 125, ap. Senior.

These sinister 'Instructions' were repudiated by the Provisional Government, but they illustrate the mistrust felt by the violent and unscrupulous Republicans in Paris for the judgement of France. Paris, indeed, sharing Louis Blanc's opinion as to the 'profound ignorance and moral inertness in which the rural districts of France are plunged', used every means, including violence and intimidation, to compel the Government to postpone indefinitely the election or meeting of a Constituent Assembly. There was at least one postponement, but the elections took place on April 23 and 24, and on May 4 the National Assembly met. Elected on the basis of manhood suffrage, its meeting sealed the fate of the 'ultras'. Of its 840 members the vast majority were men of moderate opinions; even Paris showed its preference for men of the type of Lamartine, who, besides being elected in nine other departments, headed the poll in Paris with 259,800 votes, while Blanc, who was twenty-seventh on the list, got only 121,140. No fewer than 130 avowed Legitimists secured election, besides another 100 who had supported the July monarchy. Into the hands of the Assembly the Government immediately resigned its provisional authority, and in its place the Assembly elected an Executive Committee. On that Committee neither Blanc nor Albert found a place, nor were they appointed to the ministry.

On May 10 Louis Blanc made yet another attempt to secure the appointment of a Minister of Labour and Progress, but again without success. Five days later his friends at the Luxembourg made their protest against this decision; they endeavoured to dissolve the Assembly, and to set up a new Provisional Government at the Hôtel-de-Ville. Their attempt was frustrated by the National Guard, and though Louis Blanc by a narrow majority escaped impeachment, his power was gone.

The Government, however, was still haunted by the legacy of the *droit au travail*, and still burdened with the incubus of the *ateliers nationaux*.

To the history of this experiment we must now revert.

§ 8. THE ATELIERS NATIONAUX.

The Provisional Government had proclaimed its acceptance of the doctrine of the *droit au travail* on February 25; on the 27th it had decreed the immediate establishment of national workshops, and on the 28th the Ministry of Public Works announced that 'on Wednesday, March 1, important operations would be organized in various quarters, and that any workmen who wished to take part in them must apply to one of the mayors of Paris, who would receive their applications and direct them promptly to the workyards.' Workshops there were none at the disposal of M. Marie. What were the 'important operations'? The levelling of the Place de l'Europe, which employed 1,500 men; the embankment of the Quai de la Gare, which employed 500–600; the repair and levelling of the State-road near Combevoie, where there was work for 700–800, and a few insignificant jobs on the State and departmental roads. Besides this the Minister of War had some 6,000 men working under his direction on the Champ-de-Mars.

The prescribed method of procedure for obtaining admission to a 'workshop' was as follows. The workman had first to procure from his landlord a certificate that he had resided for six months in Paris: this certificate had then to be *visé* by the police, and finally to be exchanged at the Mairie for a ticket of admission to the 'workshops'. But no 'workshops' were in existence. There was nothing but the jobs for navvies already enumerated. Such works were not only grotesquely unsuitable for unemployed artisans, but ridiculously inadequate as a means of relief for the prevailing distress. Some 6,000 men found employment in this way, but the number of applicants for work still continued to rise rapidly. Tickets of admission were issued by the mayors, the workmen tramped from one end of Paris to another in search of work, but all the *ateliers* were full up, no work could be found, and consequently the mairies were thronged night after night by a crowd of workmen, disappointed by the fruitless search for work, 'exhausted, starving, and discontented'. The inevitable happened. The Government, unable to fulfil its promise of work, felt constrained to provide pay without work. The mayors were authorized to pay to every applicant 1·50 francs a day 'on the production of a ticket showing that there was no vacancy for him in the national works'. The rate of pay on the works was 2 francs a day. Consequently, as Émile Thomas points out, 'The workman made the following simple calculation, and made it aloud: "The State gives me 30 sous for doing nothing, it pays me 40 sous when I work, so I need only work to the extent of 10 sous." This was logical.'[1] The number of applicants rose, not unnaturally, with ever-increasing rapidity; the unemployed became a serious menace to public order, and the Government were at their wits' end.

The situation was, for the moment, saved by the intervention of the man whose *History of the National Workshops* forms the second volume of this work.

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[1] *Histoire des Ateliers Nationaux, infra,* ii. 30.

§ 9. ÉMILE THOMAS.

Pierre-Émile Thomas was at this time a young man of six-and-twenty, having been born in 1822. He was descended, and proud of his descent, from an ancient and honourable *bourgeois* family which originally came from Hainault. He claimed, therefore, to belong to the class 'which has never forgotten that it has come from the people and that the cause of the people is its own'. When the Austrian Netherlands were incorporated in the French Republic, Thomas's grandfather removed to Paris, where the family settled down. His father, Albert Thomas, was a successful business man of ample fortune, which he devoted entirely to the benefit of the public. Like many philanthropists he lost not only his fortune but his illusions, and died both poor and disappointed. Philanthropy was in the blood also on the mother's side. Émile Thomas's mother was the daughter of M. Payen, the friend of Berthollet and Danton, and himself well known for his philanthropic schemes and for his scientific attainments as a chemist.

Émile Thomas and his brother were educated primarily at the free school in the Faubourg St. Martin, a school partly founded by their father for the children of the poor. At sixteen Émile became a pupil at the Central School of Arts and Manufactures, but as his taste inclined towards natural science and philosophy he was transferred to the Academy of Arts and Handicrafts, where he studied under his uncle, M. Payen. Soon after leaving the Academy he started business as a manufacturing chemist, and was doing well when the Revolution of 1848 broke out.

Successful in business, keen on his work, and happy in his domestic life, Thomas was neither a socialist nor a revolutionary agitator. But by the irony of fate his name will be, for all time, associated with one of the most disastrous experiments in municipal socialism known to history. A contented and prosperous bourgeois, with real talents for organization, he was a witness of the disorder and distress attendant upon the frenzied endeavours of the Provisional Government to find work, in hot haste, for the unemployed workmen of Paris. The Government was not without responsibility in the matter, for much of the unemployment was due less to natural economic causes than to the dislocation of trade arising from the Revolution itself. There is, moreover, a suspicion that the Ministry of Public Works was anxious to provide a counter-attraction to the Luxembourg Commission, and not to be outdone in zeal by the social philanthropy of Albert and Louis Blanc.[1] This at any rate is certain, that from the first there was no love lost between M. Marie and Louis Blanc, and no sort of co-ordination between the projects of the Luxembourg and the *ateliers nationaux.*

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[1] Cf. Lamartine, *op. cit.* ii. 100.

One of the two central bureaux where allotments of work were made and where pay in lieu of work was distributed happened to be immediately opposite the residence of Thomas in the Rue de Bondy. For a day or two he was compelled to contemplate the confusion which prevailed, and in consequence, on March 3, he sought and obtained an interview with M. Marie, the Minister for Public Works. Thomas laid his scheme before the minister and quickly convinced both him and his colleagues that if he could not provide work for the workless he could at least evolve something of order out of chaos. M. Marie ecstatically exclaimed to his colleagues that at last 'a real statesman had revealed himself'. Such material not being too abundant in Paris in 1848, the Executive wisely agreed to give the heaven-born administrator a free hand to deal with the situation.

The proposal which he made to the Government at the Hôtel-de-Ville is thus summarized by Thomas:

'In a word, the scheme I propose is the opening of a Labour Exchange (*Bureau de placement*), gratuitous and open to all, which during this special crisis shall perform the additional duty of centralizing the distribution of doles at present in the hands of the mayors. This Bureau will first register the workmen according to their trades, and will then rearrange them according to their arrondissements, with a view to avoiding contact and union between men of the same trade, such as might—at any rate in some trades—lead to grave inconvenience, if not danger.'[1]

At the same time Thomas warned his employers that the ultimate success of his scheme must necessarily depend upon the number of available 'jobs' being sufficient for the employment of the registered workmen. Organization he undertook to provide; work he did not.

§ 10. The Monceaux Administration.

Having cordially assented to his proposal, the Government conferred upon Thomas the official title of *Directeur des Ateliers Nationaux*, and assigned to him the royal villa of Monceaux as an official residence for himself, his family, and his staff, and as the head-quarters of the organization which he proposed to set up. The selection was made with the judgement and tact which from first to last distinguished the work of this young chemist. Situated on the north-western outskirts of the city, the villa was sufficiently removed from the inflammable quarters and well adapted for the designed object. Offices were hastily prepared and furnished, while the old riding-school of the villa afforded an excellent rendezvous for the mobilization of the various detachments of the unemployed army.

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[1] See *Ateliers Nationaux, infra,* ii. 52.

For into an army Thomas had decided to convert the formless and undisciplined masses of the unemployed. His one contribution to the solution of the problem was, indeed, the evolution of this quasi-military organization, and the ingenious utilization as officers of his old friends and colleagues of the École Centrale.

The applicants for work were divided into companies each about 900 strong; each company was subdivided into four lieutenancies, containing 224 men and a lieutenant; each lieutenancy into four brigades, consisting of fifty-five men and a brigadier, and each brigade into five squads. The squad, consisting of ten men and an officer, was thus the unit of the organization. A *chef de service* had command of three companies, or about 2,700 men, while a *chef d'arrondissement* had under his orders a number of *chefs de service* proportioned to the importance of his arrondissement. The companies were under the command of cadets appointed, like the lieutenants,[1] by the director, mainly from his colleagues and friends of L'École des Arts, but the brigadiers and chiefs of squads were elected by the men. A regular schedule of pay was drawn up for officers and men. The cadets of the École received five francs a day whatever their nominal rank, the lieutenants four, brigadiers three, and the foremen (or *escouadiers*) two and a half. The men themselves were paid at the rate of two francs for a working day, and one and a half for a non-working day.

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[1] The lieutenants were subsequently appointed by examination. See *Ateliers Nationaux, infra,* ii. 167.

The 'non-working days'—as will readily be imagined—soon began vastly to outnumber the 'working' days. Émile Thomas did his part of the work well; but although he could organize the applicants into companies and squads, and could merely somewhat diminish the chances of fraud and disorder, neither he nor any one else could provide them with work. The engineers of the *Ponts et Chaussées* might have done something to help, but they were jealous of Thomas and derided his scheme. A few men were employed as road-menders and navvies, and a few more were set to grub up the stumps of the trees on the boulevards which had been cut down for the barricades, and to plant young trees in their places. But such jobs were a mere drop in the ocean of unemployment, and the '*ateliers*' quickly became the laughing-stock of Paris. A workman engaged on the earthworks on the Champ-de-Mars was asked by a bystander: 'What will you do when this job is finished?' 'Ah!' replied the workman, 'that will not be for a long time!' 'But sooner or later it must come to an end,' persisted the questioner. 'Why then, I suppose, they will set us to bottle off the Seine.' As far as any economic purpose was served by the *ateliers* the workmen might as well have been set to that task from the first.

One difficulty encountered by Émile Thomas in the administration of the *ateliers* throws an interesting light upon the purity and clean-handedness of Republican politicians as compared with the greedy place-hunters who had done so much to bring discredit upon the monarchy of July. Thomas, to his ingenuous amazement, found himself inundated by applications from ministers and other prominent politicians and officials begging him to find places for their protégés as officers.

> 'Thus the new department became a kind of outlet (*exutoire*) where the gentlemen in power could get rid both of the protégés of their friends and of the solicitous place-hunters—the inevitable and shameless parasites of the new order of things—besides many more who had been reduced to starvation by the disorder and discredit of the existing régime.'

One member of the National Assembly—a complete stranger to the director—alone recommended seven hundred applicants.

> 'Similar recommendations came from every member of the Provisional Government, their wives, their children, their porters! from Louis Blanc, Flocon, Albert, and *tutti quanti*, from General Courtais, MM. Barbès, Caussidière,

brier, and later on from hundreds of members the Assembly, who tried in this way to pay eir electioneering debts.' [1]

The other sections of the unemployed, for whose stensible benefit the *ateliers* had been originally stablished, showed no sign of diminution. In ss than a week after the opening of the offices Monceaux, Thomas had brigaded 14,000 men, ealing with different arrondissements on succes-ve days. Even in these first days the scheme as costing 20,000 francs a day, and on March 16, erefore, the director announced that from the 7th the workmen would receive for a non-working ay 1 franc instead of 1·50.

That happened to be the day of the *émeute* lready described, but Thomas asserts that in hat demonstration his 'army' took no part.[2] e that as it may, the numbers of the 'army' ere swollen with alarming rapidity; by April 16 homas had enrolled 66,000 men, and before the nd of May 120,000. There is little doubt that ithin a few weeks of the establishment of the *teliers* the Government, or some members of it, ad begun to regard Thomas's army as a possible ally against the forces of socialism.[1] Louis Blanc asserts unequivocally that from the first the *ateliers* were designed with a political object. 'The real truth is', he writes, 'that they were created for no other purpose than of placing at the orders of the official adversaries of socialism an army which, if needs were, they might oppose to it.'[2] And Blanc's allegation is to some extent supported by the testimony of Thomas himself. On March 23 M. Marie sent for the director to the Hôtel-de-Ville, and informed him that a credit of five millions of francs had been voted to the *ateliers nationaux*, and that the financial service would henceforward be more regular. The account of this curious interview had better be given in Thomas's own words:

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[1] *Ateliers Nationaux*, ii. 85.

[2] See *Ateliers Nationaux*, *infra*, ii. 97–8: 'Le rapport du mité d'enquête avec une légèreté inconcevable accuse les t. Nat. d'avoir *composé* la manifestation du 17 mars . . . et n vient de voir que les quatorze mille hommes que nous rigions alors peuvent parfaitement, à cet égard, constater ur *alibi*.'

'M. Marie afterwards took me aside and asked me in a whisper whether I could count upon the working men.—"I think so," I replied; "but their number increases so considerably, that I find it very difficult to possess so direct an influence over them as I could wish."—"Don't be uneasy about the number," the minister rejoined; "if you hold them in hand, the number can never be too large; but find some means of attaching them to you sincerely. *Don't spare money; if necessary, you may be supplied with secret service funds.*"—"I don't think this will be wanted; indeed, it might be the source of rather serious difficulties. But for what other purpose than the preservation of the public tranquillity do you make these recommendations?' "For public safety. Do you think you will be able to command these men completely? *The day is, perhaps, not far distant when it may be necessary to march them into the street.*"'[1]

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[1] Cf. *Rapport de la Commission d'Enquête* (p. 14): 'On pouvait prévoir dès ce moment (i.e. the establishment of the *Ateliers*) qu'une aussi vaste agglomération d'hommes deviendrait bientôt une armée politique que les partis se disputeraient. *La portion modérée du Gouvernement le sentait si bien elle-même qu'elle voulut à différentes époques s'en faire un auxiliaire.*' (The italics are mine.)

[2] *Revelations*, p. 199; and cf. *Ateliers Nationaux*, pp. 129 seq.

Louis Blanc himself quotes[2] this passage in confirmation of his suspicions, and with undeniable effect.

The first business of both parties—both the Socialists of the Luxembourg and the Moderates of the Hôtel-de-Ville—was to win the elections now imminent. It was perhaps in the hope of contributing to the success of his patrons that Thomas organized the *Club Central des Délégués des Ateliers Nationaux*.[3] This club held its first meeting on April 2, and afterwards met regularly several times a week in the riding-school of Monceaux, under the presidency of the director himself. It consisted of delegates elected by the workmen. At first there was one delegate for every two brigades, but later on (from May 1) there was one delegate for each brigade, and one 'central' delegate for each lieutenancy. The four 'simple' delegates of each lieutenancy sat in rotation, for one month each, as 'central' delegate. Originally the idea was for the 'central' delegates only to take part in the club, but the 'simple' delegates were also summoned from time to time, bringing the number up to 2,000. Each delegate drew 2 francs a day—the pay of an ordinary worker for an active day's work, with an extra 50 c., and an additional 25 c. for every meeting attended as a 'central' delegate. Every delegate 'simple' and 'central' alike was excused work. One of the special duties of the delegates was the distribution of relief, but, besides this, they represented the interests of the workmen and discussed them with the Executive of the *ateliers*; they took part also in discussions as to rules and decrees—'in fact, until the meetings were suspended by the new director on June 1, they were the deliberative body of the *ateliers nationaux*.' Thomas's own idea was that by means of this club he would be able to 'set up an altar in opposition to that of the Luxembourg', and counteract the pernicious influence of the high priest who was installed there; that the club itself would act as a 'barometer', indicating at any given moment the real temper of the workmen and giving him the opportunity of checking any anarchical tendencies which might be subterraneously at work.[1] The idea was sound enough; nevertheless, it is easy to imagine, as the *Rapport* proceeds to point out,

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[1] *Ateliers Nationaux, infra,* ii. 146, 147.

[2] *Revelations,* p. 200.

[3] The following paragraphs are almost verbatim from the *Rapport,* ii. 142, 143.

> 'what the effect of this deliberative body—seated in the centre of power—must have been, during the two months of its existence. Open to every suggestion from outside, warped from the outset by the pernicious doctrines which filled the minds of the working men with chimerical hopes and iniquitous class-hatred, the club very soon threw off the influence of its founder. There were among them honest workmen, friends of order, men who bore with patience their burden of misery, who blushed to receive the dole of paupers; but the great mass were carried away by violent passions.'

The club quickly degenerated into a hotbed of unrest and anarchy, and the *ateliers nationaux* themselves developed into an 'army combined with a debating society'.[2]

Louis Blanc's judgement is hardly less severe than that of the official Report:

> 'The *national workshops* were nothing more than a rabble of paupers whom it was enough to feed from the want of knowing how to employ them. . . . As the kind of labour in these workshops was utterly unproductive and absurd, besides

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[1] See *Ateliers Nationaux, infra*, ii. 157. [2] *Rapport*, ii. 143.

being such as the greater part of them were utterly unaccustomed to, the action of the State was simply squandering the public funds; its money a premium upon idleness; its wages alms in disguise.'[1]

Louis Blanc was, of course, a hostile witness, jealous for his own pet schemes, but his testimony is hardly the less valuable on this account.

The Club Monceaux, however, if it did nothing else, redeemed Thomas's organization from a 'rabble of paupers', and converted it into a more or less tempered instrument for political operations. This instrument was employed with effect in the elections for the National Assembly in April, when members of the club actively canvassed on behalf of the candidates put forward on the 'moderate' ticket. Thomas himself refused to become a candidate, but despite his refusal he received 30,000 votes.

After the result of the elections became known the temper of the Paris workmen became perceptibly worse. The Socialist party, suspecting that the National Assembly would give short shrift to them and their experiments, neglected no means of raising Paris against the duly elected representatives of France. The omission of their leaders from the list of the Executive Committee confirmed their worst apprehensions, and the attempted *coup d'État* of May 15 was the result.

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[1] *Revelations*, p. 198.

Thomas was well aware of the deterioration in the temper of the *ouvriers*, and for some days previous to the 15th he laboured incessantly to reassert his personal authority among the brigaded workmen. And not unsuccessfully He was received, during a series of systematic inspections, in some quarters with enthusiasm, in almost all with respect, only in one or two with hostility. In the procession of the 15th, 14,000 men of the *ateliers* admittedly participated ; but Thomas claims that this was a very small proportion of the 100,000 now enrolled, and that his officers were successful in withdrawing even those who took part in the procession from the attack on the Assembly.

Be that as it may, the Government, encouraged by their victory on May 15, were determined to bring the experiment to an end with all possible speed. M. Trélat had now succeeded M. Marie at the Ministry of Public Works, and proved far less complaisant than his predecessor in regard to the *ateliers*. Thomas had succeeded during the month of May in getting three genuine workshops open, one for wheelwrights, another for cobblers, and a third for tailors. But despite the absorption of some workmen into these establishments the number of the unemployed mounted menacingly. The attraction of the *ateliers* was becoming irresistible to all but the better-class workmen. Private employers could not keep their men, and in consequence a number of private concerns were closed; the provinces contributed an increasing quota, and when the investigation took place it was found that 20,000 deserters and 12,000 foreigners had managed to get enrolled. One franc a day does not seem in itself a tempting bait; but with such numbers it was almost impossible to prevent fraud, and probably many men were enrolled in several brigades and drew a franc a day from each.

By the end of May the enrolment had reached the appalling total of 120,000. Assuming that each *ouvrier* represented a family of four persons, this accounted for half the entire population of Paris.[1]

§ 11. End of the Experiment.

After May 15 the Government began quietly to prepare for the struggle which the more clear-sighted among them saw to be inevitable.[2]

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[1] Senior, op. cit., p. 55.

[2] Cf. e.g. Lamartine, *Histoire*, ii. 458: 'A thunder-cloud was always before our eyes. It was formed by the *ateliers nationaux*. This army of 120,000 workpeople, the greater part of whom were idlers and agitators, was the deposit of the misery, the laziness, the vagrancy, the vice, and the sedition which the flood of the revolution had cast up and left on its shores. The Provisional Government had created these *ateliers* as a means of temporary relief, to prevent the unemployed workpeople from plundering the rich or dying of hunger, but they never concealed from themselves that the day when this mass of *imperious idlers* was to be broken up, scattered over the country, and employed in real work, must bring a change which could not be effected without resistance, without a conflict, without a formidable sedition.'

General Cavaignac was appointed Minister of War, and the regular troops who had been dispersed from Paris in February were gradually and unostentatiously brought back again, until the Executive had at its command, in the neighbourhood of the capital, a disciplined army of nearly 60,000 men.

A new spirit of assurance began, in the latter half of May, to mark the policy of the Executive. On the 17th, a commission was appointed to examine the actual condition of the *ateliers*, and further enrolments were forbidden. On the 23rd the director received orders to introduce immediate and drastic changes into the administration.

(i) All workmen who could not prove that they had resided for at least six months in Paris were to be sent away from the capital under passport;

(ii) task work was to be universally substituted for day work;

(iii) registration offices for employers in want of workmen were to be opened;

(iv) all workmen who refused work under private employers were to be dismissed;

(v) workmen who will be dispatched to the provinces were to be brigaded;

(vi) workmen were to be supplied to the director of the Chemin de fer de Lyon, who had applied for them.[1]

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[1] I follow the *Extraits des Procès-Verbaux* ap. *Rapport*, ii. 161, 162.

Thomas himself quotes a letter from the minister, said to have been received on the morning of the 24th, in which he is further instructed: 'that all unmarried workmen between the ages of 18 and 25 are to be invited to enlist in the regular army; and those who refuse are to be dismissed immediately from the *ateliers*.'[1]

The director was aghast at the order, but the only satisfaction he could obtain from M. Trélat was a respite of twenty-four hours. From Trélat he went on to M. Recurt, the Minister of the Interior, who exclaimed: 'Impossible! It is madness! This would mean insurrection to-morrow!' M. Recurt was not far wrong. On June 20 the orders were published in the *Moniteur*; on the 23rd the insurrection broke out.

Long before that Thomas's connexion with the *ateliers* had ceased. On May 25 the appointment of the Commission was announced to him, and his first impulse was to resign forthwith; but he was over-persuaded by his friends. On the same evening, however, he was summoned to the office of the minister and abruptly informed that he must resign his office of director forthwith, and must immediately leave Paris to undertake a mission to Bordeaux to study the question of lengthening the canal of Landes! Thomas naturally demurred, but was informed that a sojourn of some weeks away from Paris was essential to his safety. Not even permitted to communicate with his mother, he was deported, under arrest, to Bordeaux the very same night. At Bordeaux he and his gaolers were alike detained—apparently by a blunder—in custody, but after a short time were released. His family were officially informed that he had accepted a mission at Bordeaux. M. Trélat felt himself subsequently obliged to announce that 'in the measures taken in regard to M. Émile Thomas there was nothing which could affect his character or honour, or diminish the justice rendered to his services', while from the Tribune of the Assembly he declared that M. Thomas's acceptance of the mission to Bordeaux was entirely voluntary. Some latitude is doubtless permissible to ministers who are compelled to reply to inconvenient questions in a popular Assembly, but the least that can be said is that M. Trélat appears to have availed himself of this privilege to the full.

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[1] See *Ateliers Nationaux, infra,* ii. 271, 272; in the *Procès-Verbal* this order is dated June 16.

Why was Émile Thomas deported to Bordeaux? The question has never been answered. We can only surmise that the Executive, with or without reason, feared that he might employ the immense influence which he had legitimately acquired over his vast 'army' to obstruct or defeat the policy on which they were now, very wisely, resolved.[1]

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[1] See explanation of Garnier-Pagès ap. Thomas, p. 324.

Whether they had any ground for their apprehension it is impossible to say. But this much ought in fairness to be added. The very elaborate investigation subsequently held brought nothing to light which impugned the honour of Émile Thomas. The Commissioners naturally discovered terrible confusion in the accounts of the *ateliers*, but they did not venture to reproach Thomas with anything worse than ‘extravagance, neglect of forms, and a certain arbitrariness’.[1]

Another question remains unanswered: How far did the dismissal of the director contribute to the insurrection of the workmen in June? There is nothing in the public record to discredit the repeated assertions of Thomas himself that in the successive *émeutes* of March, April and May he invariably threw his weight, and that of the men he commanded, on to the side of order. But would he have held his men, in face of the new policy announced by the Executive and strongly disapproved by himself? And could he, if he would?

To these questions no answer is possible. The facts must nevertheless be briefly narrated.

On June 19 an interesting debate on the *ateliers* took place in the Assembly. The Government consented to grant another three million francs for the *ateliers*, but intimated that no further grants on a similar scale were to be looked for.

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[1] *Rapport*, ii. 156, and cf. also i. 41.

M. Trélat deprecated hasty measures, though he assured the Assembly that the unemployed would be drafted into the provinces as quickly as circumstances permitted.

On June 20 the decrees of the Government, communicated to Thomas on May 24, were published, and on the 22nd an order was issued that 3,000 of the provincial workmen, provided with journey-money and food, were to be sent home at once., Immediately, that happened which Thomas had striven energetically to avert: the delegates of the *ateliers* made common cause with the delegates of the Luxembourg; the cry was raised: 'Down with the Executive Commission', and before nightfall of the 22nd crowds collected in the streets, and everything pointed to a renewal of grave disorder.

The event was more terrible than the anticipation. The scenes enacted in the streets of Paris during the next four days have rarely been paralleled in that or any other civilized city.

On the 23rd the whole city was in tumult; barricades were thrown up in the faubourgs with astonishing rapidity; in one faubourg alone 500 barricades were counted; many of them flew the red flag, and all were defended with extraordinary courage and tenacity. Fortunately, a large body of regulars had been massed in the neighbourhood of Paris; the National Guard and the Garde Mobile not only stood firm, but behaved with conspicuous gallantry, and in the afternoon of the 23rd the command of the troops of all arms was entrusted to General Cavaignac. Still, the insurrection was not quelled. On the 24th the Executive Commission resigned, and devolved dictatorial powers upon General Cavaignac. Large bodies of National Guards poured into the capital from provincial cities such as Rouen and Amiens, and gradually the forces of order began to make headway against the insurgents. The next day—Sunday—saw no cessation of strife, and the Archbishop of Paris made an heroic effort to mediate between the mob and the troops and so put a stop to the terrible effusion of blood. But a chance shot killed the kindly prelate, and still the fight went on. The artillery had long since been brought into action, but the insurgents driven from one barricade only took up their position at the next. Slowly, however, General Cavaignac, admirably seconded by General Lamoricière, made himself master of point after point, and at noon on the 26th he was able to announce to the Assembly that fighting was at an end and that the elements of disorder were quelled.

Estimates as to the loss of life differ widely. Lord Normanby, then British Ambassador in Paris, put the total losses on both sides in killed and wounded at 16,000.[1] This may possibly be true, for one estimate puts the loss on the Government side at 10,000, including no fewer than ten general officers; the insurgents, fighting behind barricades and within the shelter of houses, probably suffered less severely, but many thousands of them fell in the street fighting, and 12,000 were taken prisoners.

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[1] Op. cit., ii. 95.

Thus did the Republic triumph over socialism, but in destroying socialism it destroyed itself.

Two days after his victory was consummated General Cavaignac laid down his dictatorial powers, but a grateful Assembly elected him, almost unanimously, to the Presidency of the Council. Until the election of the President of the Republic, in December, Cavaignac was virtually the ruler of France.

On July 3 he announced that the *ateliers nationaux* would be closed, and a Commission appointed to investigate the causes of the insurrection of June and its relation to that of May 15. To the findings of the Commission frequent reference has been made in the above pages. Of individuals, those who came in for the largest share of censure were Ledru-Rollin, sometime Minister of the Interior, Caussidière, once Prefect of Police, Barbès, Blanqui, and Louis Blanc. 'In particular', the Report runs, 'a most poisonous influence was exercised by the speeches made and the principles promulgated by M. Louis Blanc among the workmen assembled there.'[1]

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[1] i.e. at the Luxembourg.

It was this proposal which drew forth a vigorous protest from one of the sanest of French statesmen, M. Thiers :—

'To promise what is impossible is to deceive the people, and to expose them to the deceptions which they will afterwards revenge with their muskets. . . . To proclaim the right of man to labour—is not this entering into an absolute engagement to furnish work to those who are unemployed at all times and on all occasions ? If this engagement can be fulfilled I do not oppose it ; but who here will venture to affirm the possibility ? I have reflected much on what is now called the organization of labour (a newly invented word for a thing by no means novel), and I have deplored the imprudence with which questions were raised utterly incapable of solution. Can work always be insured to the operatives ? . . . Is not the promise to do so entering into an engagement beforehand to renew the recent and disastrous experiment of the national workshops ?'

To point the moral of the events of the first six months of 1848 is unnecessary; one word only need be added to complete the sequence. The overthrow of the July Monarchy issued in the Republic of February ; the Republic proclaimed the 'right to work' ; the attempt to redeem the pledge issued in the *ateliers nationaux*, and the *ateliers* in the sanguinary conflict of the 'days of June'. When, in December, the French people were called upon to elect by manhood suffrage the first President of the Republic, they gave to Lamartine, the hero of February, 17,910 votes ; to General Cavaignac, who had saved the situation in June, they gave 1,448,107 ; to a third candidate, who at the opportune moment came forward to declare that his name was the symbol of 'order, nationality, and glory', they gave the astonishing total of 5,434,226.

Prince Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, elected President in 1848, obtained confirmation and prolongation of his powers by a *coup d'État* in December 1851, and exactly a year later, by a second *coup d'État*, he transformed the Presidency into an hereditary Empire.

In less than half a decade France had boxed the political compass.

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